

I had moments where tears fell—of joy—and the privilege of talking to and meeting these men, watching them receive the honor from the French people, and as we walked through the streets even today, the people of France were saying thank you with a degree of emotion that knew that they would not be free, they would not be liberated, they would not be France if it had not been for those boys who left the soil of this United States; or those who came from Guadeloupe and Martinique, men of color who came and were trained from Fort Dix and then fought on the shores; or my uncle, who fought in Tunis and Ethiopia; and others who left my widowed grandmother, her three sons, leaving one behind—all of us have been touched.

So it is important that, even as we look to the status of Sergeant Bergdahl, that we look at it in a spirit of fairness, not grandstanding, not partisan politics, but finding out the facts and realizing that America is greater than divisive politics when you look to the Greatest Generation of which we have now been given the gift of their life, their sacrifice.

No one will be the same after they have walked amongst the white crosses that represent the blood shed by America, not to conquer Europe, but to free Europe. That is our mantra, and that is what we should do for the American people, not to conquer them, but to free them from violence, from inconsistent policies, and certainly from the inability to vote.

I pay tribute to the 70th commemoration of the brilliance of America and the spirit of her youth, and I tell everyone that that brilliance and that spirit is not lost upon us today.

I am happy because I know that embedded in all of those who walk the streets of this Nation and call themselves an American have that same spirit, and we can make a difference in this country for all of those who need us.

AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, along with other Members of Congress, I attended a classified briefing on the swap of our soldier for the five Taliban leaders. I won't go into that, but I did have an opportunity to make a comment to the presenters.

I made a comment regarding my concern about the bilateral strategic agreement, known as BSA, and the fact that we continue to spend money in Afghanistan that we borrow from foreign nations.

Mr. Speaker, beside me today, I have a cartoon that was created by Mr. Milt Priggee, and it makes a point very well. It has Uncle Sam pointing out saying:

I want you.

Then the language beside it says:

To understand that if you can't afford to take care of your veterans, you can't afford to go to war.

Well, that makes my point very well because we seem to find all the money we need for Afghanistan to waste, and we know that waste, fraud, and abuse is worse today than it has ever been in the 12 years we have been in Afghanistan.

I would like to quote from the Daily Journal Online. The title is, "No end for Afghanistan's war on the U.S. taxpayer." I want to read two paragraphs from this online article:

John Sopko, the inspector general for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), may have taken Uncle Sam and shaken him by the lapels last month, but the media missed it. In short, Afghanistan is on life support, and Joe Citizen is its permanent IV. From your pockets, Uncle Sam has taken \$103 billion to build Afghanistan so far.

By the way, that figure doesn't include the cost of war-making. That is more money than we have spent on reconstruction for any one country in the history of the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I just heard the Congressman from Connecticut talking about the infrastructure of his State, as well as America, and the poor shape it is in, but yet we find all the money we need for Afghanistan, so we can build their roads, so that the Taliban can blow up the roads. It makes no sense.

Mr. Speaker, SIGAR, on the job since 2008, has produced 118 audits and inspection reports and made 23 quarterly reports to Congress. I have read a few of these, certainly not all, but all you have to do is hear Mr. Sopko speak or read some of the reports from his organization, and you will be disgusted, as I am disgusted, with the stupidity of continuing to find money for Afghanistan while we cut programs right here in America.

Mr. Speaker, 2 weeks ago, I went to Walter Reed Hospital. I knew there were two marines who had been injured in Afghanistan from my district, Camp Lejeune, which is in the Third District of North Carolina.

I happened, while being there, to meet four soldiers, one a colonel from Fort Bragg, which is not in my district, but in North Carolina. All four had lost at least one leg. Then when I met this young man from Louisiana, who is a marine from Camp Lejeune, his father was standing beside him.

He had lost both legs and an arm, and he is 23 years of age. I looked in the eyes of the father, who could not have been more than 50. I saw pain. I saw hurt. I saw worry about the future of his son's life, missing two legs and an arm.

Why are we still sending troops to Afghanistan? Yes, we are going to cut the troops, but we are going to keep 9,000 to 10,000 there. The Taliban will still go after them and try to blow off their legs and kill them.

Mr. Speaker, I want to quote Pat Buchanan, who I have great respect

for, particularly on foreign policy, because he and I agree:

Is it not a symptom of senility to be borrowing from the world so we can defend the world?

Let me repeat that:

Is it not a symptom of senility to be borrowing from the world so we can defend the world?

Mr. Speaker, I would put one word in there. I would change "senility" to "stupidity," and I will read it now: Is it not a symptom of stupidity to be borrowing from the world, so we defend the world?

Mr. Speaker, again, Uncle Sam is saying, Don't spend money overseas when you have got problems right here in America and our veterans are not being adequately cared for.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to end the spending in Afghanistan. It is time to stop sending our troops over there to be killed and have their legs and arms blown off.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask God to continue to bless America and bless our men and women in uniform.

INDIA'S SANITATION CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, the recent news account of a horrific murder and rape of two young girls in India shocked our consciousness, but one of the items that was interesting is that few of the news accounts actually detailed what put those young women at risk.

Julie McCarthy of NPR had a story which highlighted one of the greatest human global health challenges that created this situation. They were indeed attacked, raped, and hung from a tree after they were caught in a field.

These two young women didn't have access to a toilet, and like so many women around the world, but particularly in India, they went out in the fields at night to relieve themselves, and they went in a pair to minimize the likelihood that they would be isolated.

This is offensive on so many levels. It is emblematic of violence against women, the vicious attitudes by people towards lower castes, and the complicated dynamic of castes in rural India.

It is also testimony to the need to be able to have these young women—and others around the globe—have access to adequate sanitation facilities, so they don't have to sneak out at night or early in the morning, cloaked in darkness to disguise their embarrassment, to use a nearby field as their restroom.

One-half of India's population uses open fields for defecation. Fewer than half of Indian households have a toilet. The women and girls perform a ritual to deal with this most basic bodily function, often in fear and trepidation.

This is one more piece of evidence as to why the American effort to increase our help for access to basic sanitation and safe drinking water is a moral imperative, as well as being critical for global health, security, education, and stable economic development.

Globally, 2.5 billion men, women, and children do not have access to adequate sanitation. This means that there are more people on Earth with a cell phone than with a toilet. Countries where open defecation is more prevalent also have the highest numbers of deaths for children under five, high levels of undernutrition and poverty, and huge disparities between rich and poor.

The lack of adequate sanitation is a huge drag on economies at a national level. The total global economic losses associated with inadequate water supply and sanitation are estimated to be \$260 billion annually.

According to the World Bank for India alone, inadequate sanitation costs the country the equivalent of 6.4 percent of their gross domestic product, over \$50 billion a year.

Not only do women have to plan their day around performing this most basic bodily function, they are also most likely to be the family members tasked with collecting drinking water—often dirty and polluted—for their families.

In fact, in just one day, it is estimated that more than 152 million hours of women and girls' time is consumed for another most basic of human need—collecting water, often from distant, polluted sources. This is time not spent working on income-generating jobs, caring for family members, or securing an education. The average distance for many of these women and girls is 10 miles a day.

Like a woman's search for a safe place to relieve herself, the search for drinking water, particularly when they must walk alone before or after daylight hours, leaves her vulnerable to rape and other violent attacks.

The most acutely impacted, however, are children. Over 1,400 children die every day from diarrhea caused from dirty water and poor sanitation. The lack of access to safe drinking water means a child dies needlessly every minute.

These are heartbreaking stories and jarring facts, but there are solutions. That is why I am hopeful we will be able to work with our friends on the House Foreign Affairs Committee to move the bipartisan bill that I am working with Judge POE, Water for the World Act, H.R. 2901, to make American efforts more effective to deal with preventing the needless loss of a child's life every minute and the threat to young women and girls.

If we needed more evidence, consider the lynching of these two teenage rape victims in India. How could we not do all we can?

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY, SHANNON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from

Illinois (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, for the first time in 19 years, I was unable to wake up and wish my wife, Shannon, a happy anniversary in person; so, Mr. Speaker, I stand here on the floor of the House today to do just that.

Shannon, you are not only my best friend, my rock, and my biggest supporter, you are the reason why I have this privilege of standing here in this great institution to serve the 13th District of Illinois. It is what you have shown us as not only a nurse, a mother, and as my best friend, it is a strength that only comes from being you.

Fifteen years ago, you stared at a battlefield of colon cancer in front of you. You stared down that battlefield, and you beat it.

What you may not know is that strength that you showed at that time is a strength that is an inspiration to not only me, but to our three children and to so many of us that know you.

Shannon, today, on our 19th anniversary, I stand here today to wish you the happiest of happy anniversaries, and I hope to be home soon this weekend to celebrate in person with you.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I didn't say, "I love you, Shannon," before I yielded back.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 30 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Eternal God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

We thank You once again that we, Your creatures, can come before You and ask guidance for the men and women of the people's House.

Send Your spirit of wisdom as they face this day with difficult decisions to be made, determining among competing interests to appropriate funds for the programs required to serve the needs of our Nation. Might they work together with charity, and join their efforts to accomplish what our Nation needs to live into a prosperous and secure future.

Please keep all the Members of this Congress, and all who work for the people's House, in good health, that they might faithfully fulfill the great re-

sponsibility given them by the people of this great Nation.

Bless us this day and every day. May all that is done here this day be for Your greater honor and glory. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentlewoman from California (Ms. CHU) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. CHU led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

OPERATION CHOKE POINT

(Mr. WILLIAMS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILLIAMS. Mr. Speaker, one of the most abusive government overreaches in our Nation's history is happening right now under our watch. Operation Choke Point began quietly last year as a way for President Obama and the Justice Department to intimidate and strangle businesses they no longer support.

By forcing banks to cut ties with law-abiding businesses like sporting goods stores, licensed gun dealers, and thousands of others, these business owners have no recourse.

Once again, President Obama is circumventing the legal and legislative process that was set in place to protect the free market, personal choice, and individual freedom. When did it become okay for the Federal Government of the United States of America to tell business owners that their business is no longer wanted in America? That is socialism in its purest form.

Owning the banks and owning the market is the goal of this administration, and I urge my colleagues in Congress, as well as anyone who has ever owned or dreamed about owning their own business, to end the abuse. Operation Choke Point is an affront to the freedoms and liberty that millions of Americans have died to protect.

In God we trust.